

PRISON

POLICY INITIATIVE

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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I write to share with you a project, available at <http://fcc.prisonpolicy.org>, that we developed to make the two dockets about regulating the prison and jail telephone industry more accessible to the public, policymakers, the media, and FCC staff.

In short, our tool makes the contents of FCC dockets 96-128 and 12-375 searchable, and, once we launch crowdsourced tagging features, the data will become even more accessible. The tool was created at the Hack for Western Mass, one of more than 90 National Day of Civic Hacking events around the country held on June 1st and 2nd in response to the White House's call to bring together technology-minded people to solve social problems. The team for this project included Jennie D'Ambroise, Sam Duncan, Jonathan Hills, Jake Mitchell, Sondra Morin, Alfred Natile, Gyepi Sam, Aaron Smith, and John Tobey. A more detailed summary of this "Unlocking Prison Phone Data" project is available at: <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2013/06/03/fcc-civic-hack/>.

Our tool makes the majority of the documents in both dockets searchable, both by metadata (such as author, law firm, etc.), and by content, which is extracted from the PDF files. We are still working on the outliers, which are a small number of the larger PDF files and, of course, the handwritten submissions. We believe, however, that you will find the tool useful in its current form for at least some of your work on these dockets.

Specifically, we imagine that the FCC and stakeholders can use this tool in three ways:

1. Staff and concerned stakeholders can use this tool now in their own work on the 12-375 proceeding.
2. Our tool could be readily adapted to work on any number of FCC dockets simply by changing the docket number in our software and, optionally, adapting the tagging system to match the subject matter. Both steps are designed into the software and easy to accomplish.
3. Some portions of the technology we developed for this project might be useful models for future improvements to the FCC's current Electronic Comment Filing System.

The source code for our tool is available on Github in two projects at <https://github.com/hackforwesternmass/uppd/> and at <https://github.com/gyepisam/fcc-textify>. We hope that you find this tool helpful. Thank you for your important work examining the fairness of the current prison and jail telephone market.

Sincerely,



Peter Wagner
Executive Director

s/n

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